

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT

INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO.

25X1

COUNTRY East Germany

DATE DISTR. 28 September 1955

SUBJECT 1. Main Administration for Roads of the
 Ministry for Transport
 2. Condition of East German Roads

NO. OF PAGES 11

PLACE
ACQUIRED

NO. OF ENCLS.
(LISTED BELOW)

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DATE OF INFO.

SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO.

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1. The Main Administration for Highways (~~HW-Strassenwesen~~) centrally controls the construction and maintenance of all long-distance highways and Autobahnen as well as of bridges located on these highways. This agency also supervises construction and maintenance work on class I and II roads which are under the administrative responsibility of GDR Bezirke. The Main Administration for Highways is also in charge of planning for all road and bridge construction work; it drafts the economic plans (Volkswirtschaftsplaene) of all nationalized road construction and maintenance enterprises and controls the execution of these plans. Monetary means required for new road construction projects, general repair work and road maintenance work are also made available by the agency. All winter services designed to keep roads open during the winter months are also centrally controlled. The agency cooperates with the Ministry of the Interior in the field of road construction projects undertaken by this ministry on behalf of the KVP. Regulations pertaining to road traffic are also issued by the Main Administration for Highways.
2. Leading personnel¹ attached to the main administration for highways include:

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Chief of the Main Administration Kurt Leiser,

Abteilung Bau und Betriebe
(Construction Department)

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Departmental Chief

Schlag (fnu)

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Hauptreferent
(First Referent)

Nadoll (fnu),

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Oberreferent (Chief Referent)

Wolfgang Muehler,

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Labor Department

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Chief of the department

Kurt Urban,

Chief Referent

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Gustav Flehm,

Chief Referent

Klinger (fnu)

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Female Secretary

Kegel (fnu),

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Planning Department

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Chief of the department

Berg (fnu)

Chief Referent for
Investments

Paul Hovenbitzer

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Chief Referent

Dagmar Gruenberg

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Referent

Harry Tasche

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Hauptsachbearbeiter
(assistant referent)

Edith Gerich

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Assistant Referent

Utermark (fnu).

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Female secretary

Schoppan (fnu)

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Bridge Department

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Departmental Chief

Rudolf Schild

Chief Referent

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Henry Waltenberg

Chief Referent

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Sigfried Kasper

Female secretary

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Schmidt (fnu)

Draftsman

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Reich (fnu)

Highway Department

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Chief of the department

Hans Ochsmann

Female secretary

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Haldensleben (fnu)

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Referent

Haering (fnu)

Chief Referent

Stehling (fnu)

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Chief Referent

Frl. Nagel (fnu)

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Research Development
Department

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Departmental chief

Schiller (fnu)

Chief Referent

Hicke (fnu)

25X1

Female secretary

Frl. Schroeter (fnu)

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Finance Department

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Chief of the department

Wagner (fnu)

Referent

Georg Glowicki

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Assistant Referent

Schoenfeld (fnu)

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Female secretary

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Koch (fnu)

Material Supply Department

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Chief of the department

Schiewer (fnu)

Chief Referent

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Bauermeister (fnu)

Assistant Referent

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Frau Gnevkow (fnu)

3. Agencies and enterprises assigned to the Main Administration.

include:

a. Traffic departments

Rostock
Schwerin
Neubrandenburg
Potsdam
Frankfurt/Oder
Cottbus
Magdeburg
Halle/Saale
Erfurt
Gera
Suhl
Dresden
Karl-Marx-Stadt
Leipzig

b. The nationalized Designs Bureau for Road Construction Work in Berlin.

c. Staatlicher Strassenunterhaltungsbetrieb (State Road Maintenance Enterprises)(SSUB) in the following towns:

Halle on the Saale River (for Autobahnen)
Stralsund
Schwerin
Neustrelitz
Brandenburg

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Kyritz
Strausberg
Cottbus
Magdeburg
Stendal
Halberstadt
Halle on the Saale River
Eisleben
Wittenberg
Erfurt
Muehlhausen
Gera
Meiningen
Dresden
Bautzen
Karl-Marx-Stadt
Zwickau
Plauen
Leipzig

d. Nationalized Road Construction Enterprises at:

Greifswald
Potsdam
Halle on the Saale River
Weimar

4. The following details on operations and administrative procedures were furnished: 1

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a. The Main Administration for Highways is in charge of all long-distance highways and Autobahnen, as well as of bridges on these highways and of Autobahn resthouses. Prior to 1953, new road and bridge construction projects had to be approved by the Soviet Control Commission, which also designated those bridges whose load capacity had to be increased from 20 to 40 tons for wheeled vehicles and 80 tons for tracked vehicles. The Soviets were primarily interested in the existence of a modern east-west route in the northern portion of the GDR. In 1954, the responsibility for all highway construction projects was transferred to the Ministry of the Interior. Liaison officer between the Ministry of the Interior and the Main Administration for Highways was Department Chief Messerschmidt, who in late 1954 was replaced by Ochsmann. The volume of construction work to be done for the Ministry of the Interior increased so much that the volume of road construction work done for civilian purposes dwindled more and more. Of all road construction projects executed in 1954, only 25 percent were of a commercial nature, while 75 percent were of a purely military character. The Autobahn bridge over the Oder River at Frankfurt, a so-called "friendship project" will cost approximately 48,000,000 DEM. Since 1952, from 20 to 25 percent of the money available for bridge construction projects has annually been allocated for this project. Roads built on behalf of the Ministry of the Interior are financed by this ministry and construction work is not under the control of the State Commission. Such roads are constructed by the nationalized Design Office for Road Construction Projects in Berlin. Approximate and byroads required by highway construction projects of the Ministry of the Interior must be financed by the administrative agencies concerned, i.e. either Kreis or Bezirk administrations.

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Construction projects of the Ministry of the Interior were under way at Strausberg, Weisswasser, Prora-Lanken and Torgelow.

- b. Construction materials, road construction machinery and the labor force available were adequate for a volume of construction work valued at 70,000,000 DME. It is believed that the volume of construction work executed in 1955 will be much smaller in view of major construction projects planned by the Ministry of the Interior. In connection with these projects, some Bau-Union firms have already been withdrawn from public construction projects. The situation in the GDR building industry is rather tight, because structural steel, timber and cement are in short supply and subject to rationing. Money allocated to new construction projects critically reduces the funds available for general repair and maintenance work. The consequences of this situation is that the physical status of all roads has deteriorated considerably since World War II. Only brown coal tar is used for the surface treatment of highways. The quality of repair work done leaves much to be desired, because the subsurface of roads cannot be reconditioned in view of the shortage of stones. In the winter of 1954/1955, frost damage occurring in Bezirk Leipzig amounted to 23,000,000 DME. The production of stones cannot be raised for lack of quarrying machines, although 4 large Soviet stone breakers were recently made available. Well hardened crushed jaws are in short supply in all quarries. In view of this situation, the resolution has been taken henceforth to provide highways only with concrete surfaces. A granulated blast furnace cement is mostly used as a bed for the surface layer. This cement is furnished by the Foundry Combine East (EKO) at Fuerstenberg/GDR (Stalinstadt). Almost the entire output of copper-slag bricks is exported.
- c. Four special highway maintenance enterprises are available for the construction of new highways and general repair work on roads. A total of 23 "Staatliche Strassenunterhaltungsbetriebe" (State Highway Maintenance Enterprises) (SSUB) are employed for road maintenance work. Each SSUB controls several Kreis road maintenance points. The SSUB responsible for maintenance work on Autobahnen is located in Halle/Saale. This agency controls 6 field main posts (Hauptbetriebsstelle). All the 28 enterprises mentioned are controlled by the Construction Department of the Main Administration for Highways.
- d. When a Polish delegation of highways technicians visited the GDR Main Administration for Highways, it was learned that the Poles were spending most of their money on construction projects and the maintenance of highways throughout the GDR. It was believed that about 50 percent of the road construction machinery used by the Poles dated from the period 1910 - 1922. The remainder were modern Polish and Soviet machines. Information obtained indicated that administrative procedures in Poland were more efficient than in the GDR. Highway construction projects were generally started on schedule and construction material seemed to be available in adequate quantities. Profits made by the individual construction enterprises are not transferred to the State, but invested by the enterprise involved. The wages of Polish road construction and maintenance workers are 80 percent of the wages paid in Germany. The leading personnel of Polish road maintenance agencies is probably more efficient than the corresponding personnel in the GDR.

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The expansion of machine and tractor stations in the GDR represents an additional strain on East German highways. The heavy machinery of these agencies subject highways to an excessive wear. The shortage of stones required for road construction projects is so acute that the stone walls of various village ~~suburbs~~ were dismantled for road construction purposes.

- h. Plans for the construction of new highways and bridges did not sufficiently take into consideration the monetary means and the construction materials required. The monetary means required for highway and bridge construction projects exceeded by 70 to 100 percent the sums earmarked to be spent according to preliminary plans (Kontrollplan). A construction project is listed in a so-called ~~provisional plan~~ (provisional plan). Detailed reasons are given for the necessity of the execution of this project and an estimate of cost is also made. The ~~plan~~ must be approved by the State Planning Commission, usually 18 months before the beginning of construction work. After the ~~plan~~ has been approved, the Designs Bureau for Road Construction Projects begins to work on the so-called "Vor- und Feinprojektierungsvertrage". Completed designs are checked at Potsdam, Berlin and then forwarded to the planning agency involved. After the projects have been cleared, the highway construction project will be signed and approved by the Minister or State Secretary. The budget committee of the Volkskammer checks on the volume of highway construction projects submitted by the various planning agencies. Usually, the Volkskammer cuts the sums planned to be spent on highway construction projects. In 1955, these cuts were very heavy. The whole procedure of checks and controls by various administrative agencies drastically changed the original investment plan, drawn up by the Main Administration for Highways. Since time available is usually very short, the modifications to be made are effected in a hasty way.

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~~Plans~~ a total of 31,000 plans had to be modified in the GDR. This experience induced the Main Administration for Highways to include in its provisional plans (Projektierungsplaene) for highway and bridge construction projects, imaginary projects which could be eliminated in the event that monetary allocations for construction projects were cut. Plans made for the reconstruction of damaged bridges suffered from the fact that in most cases the extent of damage could only be determined after the debris had been cleared away from the structure involved. It happened that the cost of repair work was much higher than assumed in the provisional plan submitted. This again led to a time-consuming modification of investment plans which had to be approved by the GDR Council of Ministers. In 1954, plans made for financing of reconstruction work on bridges had to be modified 4 times on some occasions. After 1954, plans made for bridge construction work were fulfilled 35 to 40 percent. It is a law in the GDR that financial plans approved for highway and bridge construction projects must be minutely followed by nationalized construction enterprises. Since estimates of cost made by the state agencies leave much to be desired, construction enterprises are reluctant to accept the contracts offered. The quarrels resulting from these differences often extend over several weeks. For fear of losing the contract which only ~~allows~~ construction work a specific sum must be made. Planning work is also hampered

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by the fact that work at designs offices is done by so-called brigades which put the quantity of work performed before quality of performance. The consequence is that designs completed have to be modified several times. Thus, for example, the designs for the bridge over the Spree River at Cottbus and the Saale River at Schkopau had to be changed 3 or 4 times after construction work had already been started. The structural steel delivered for the bridge at Schkopau had to be replaced 3 times. When it was found out that the last delivered steel was also inadequate, the entire design of the bridge was modified. This involved a non-scheduled outlay of 1,200,000 DME.

- i. The production of structural steel in the GDR is a critical problem. Production plans of rolling mills are often made irrespective of actual requirements. Very often, the structural steel required for the individual construction sites arrived only in the 4th quarter of the year and the consequence was that construction work could not be completed on schedule.

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1. Comment. Many of the names mentioned in the present report were known previously.

It is believed that the information on the ~~development~~ of GDR highways is correct. A shortage of funds and construction materials in addition to very clumsy administrative procedure make it improbable that the deterioration in the physical status of roads will be stopped in the near future.

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the 1954 road and bridge construction program was fulfilled 92.8 percent, while the present report indicates that this program was only fulfilled 50 percent at most.

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